



**City of Woodstock
Office of the City Manager**

Phone (815) 338-4301 • Fax (815) 334-2269
citymanager@woodstockil.gov
www.woodstockil.gov

121 W. Calhoun Street
Woodstock, Illinois 60098

Roscoe C. Stelford III
City Manager

**SPECIAL MEETING
WOODSTOCK CITY COUNCIL**

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

AGENDA

The City Council Workshop is a working session of the City Council, and City Administration. While this is a public meeting, no public comments will be entertained during discussion items.

Mayor Turner explained the process for this Strategic Planning Workshop. The meeting was called to order at 2:01 PM.

A roll call was taken.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Darrin Flynn, Lisa Lohmeyer, Wendy Piersall, Gordon Tebo, and Mayor Michael Turner.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Nierman and Bob Seegers, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Roscoe Stelford, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director Paul Christensen, Building & Zoning Director Joe Napolitano, Information Technology Director Dan McElmeel, Opera House Managing Director Daniel Campbell, Public Works Director Christina Betz, Chief John Lieb, Economic Development Director Garrett Anderson, Library Director Nick Weber, Recreation Department Director Dave Zinnen, Grants/Communications Manager Terry Willcockson and Chief Deputy City Clerk Jane Howie.

OTHERS PRESENT TELEPHONICALLY: City Attorney Ruth Schlossberg.

Councilmen Nierman and Seegers arrived at 2:03 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Resident David Gutowsky, President & Founder of Internet Freedom for McHenry County, mentioned the infrastructure involved in the strategic plan, and thanked Council for their support, which helped his organization obtain a grant from the State of Illinois. He explained that the county has issues with fiber infrastructure, and he'd like to assist with these issues. He mentioned that Congresswoman Underwood is supportive of these initiatives. D. Gutowsky said it is his hope that Woodstock assists in getting fiber to all residents. Mayor Turner thanked Mr. Gutowsky and said he is open to his ideas, as the City would like to hear his thoughts.

A. Objectives of the Session

Mayor Turner stated that the objectives for today's session are for Council to discuss these very important topics, and to provide their thoughts and consensus for ideas to provide a sense of direction to City staff. He added that it is not the purpose to make decisions today, but only time for discussion.

B. Format of Discussions

C. City Priorities for Council Discussion

1. City Organization Re-Structure / Strategic Planning

Mayor Turner opined he'd like the City to have a more strategic focus and to be less reactionary and more proactive. He shared documents for a potential organizational structure for the City of Woodstock and mentioned that currently City Manager Stelford has 13 direct reports. Mayor Turner added that he did some research on other municipalities and he shared the organization chart from the Village of Algonquin. He stated that one of his goals is to determine if this other type of structure would be beneficial for the City of Woodstock. He noted that the proposed org chart includes three Executive Directors and the Chief of Police, which would all be direct reports to the City Manager. In addition, Mayor Turner said he'd like to see the marketing for the City of Woodstock elevated along with business development and planning. He believes a strategic plan is the best place to start to assist the City Manager.

In response to a question from Councilman Seegers, R. Stelford explained how employees are evaluated, such as providing fluid goals and objectives, stretch goals and performance measures. R. Stelford said the City of Woodstock is an organization that strives for excellence. Mayor Turner explained that this topic will be further discussed.

Council members Lohmeyer, Seegers, Niernan, Piersall and Flynn, along with Mayor Turner, were supportive of exploring a new organizational chart.

Mayor Turner stated that a leader needs to be forward thinking and he believes an executive team is needed to assist the City Manager with succinct strategies, productivity and key performance indicators. He added that this will provide accountability on every level and will make it much more manageable. G. Tebo said, with his background in education, that he is concerned that this could cause a loss of communication. He asked what the reasons are for Council wanting to implement these changes. He added that he's not opposed to the idea, but he's concerned about the return on this investment. Mayor Turner said the Executive Directors would need to keep the communication open between the City Manager and the Department Directors.

Mayor Turner is looking for a consensus that this proposed organizational chart is worth exploring, and he's looking for R. Stelford's honest feedback on this proposal. He wants to know how it would be financed and implemented. Mayor Turner asked for any further comments on this topic. He added that the purpose of these changes would be to evolve who we are as a City and to address the demands and expectations of our residents.

2. Economic Development Retention & Attraction

Mayor Turner stated he wants to hear what the City is doing from an economic development standpoint, how we are attracting and retaining businesses. He added that the City did tremendous things during the pandemic, but now the pace needs to improve; less government and more private industry. D. Flynn asked the City how it track leads, with designations such as active or passive. He'd asked if the City uses a shared tool that all three department employees can utilize. In response to Councilman Flynn's questions, G. Anderson said the majority are leads, which we receive from connections with realtors and land owners. Mayor Turner stated that many parcels are sitting empty. He suggested that staff contact realtors and find developers. He opined he would like the City to be more proactive; sell retailers, restaurants, on land and vacant buildings. D. Flynn asked for a clear message on what the priorities are. Mayor Turner said he hopes the expectations are not unreasonable. Synergy creates things going on in the City. L. Lohmeyer mentioned retention and networking, a CRM tool. She opined Woodstock needs to keep people here and grow their businesses here. G. Tebo said the City needs to bring in new ideas.

K. Coltrin mentioned the CRM program and added that staff is meeting with representatives tomorrow. K. Coltrin said this community is very entrepreneurial both as business owners and landowners. Mayor Turner stated the automation should be able to expand into other areas and useful to other departments.

W. Piersall said the City has a reputation that things are difficult to pass by the Plan Commission. She's concerned that there are some anti-growth members. Mayor Turner reminded staff to get to the 'No' quickly, but start with 'yes' as a premise, especially as it pertains to economic development, the opera house and community events.. B. Seegers said he believes it is more a perception than a reality. G. Anderson said a lot of information pertaining to the City's Economic Development Department can be found at www.choosewoodstock.com. J. Napolitano reviewed the Brink Street Properties project and the PUD process.

The City Council meeting recessed at 3:35 PM.

The City Council meeting resumed at 3:45 PM.

Mayor Turner called the meeting to order. All members of Council were present.

3. Opera House Strategy

Mayor Turner mentioned how the Opera House struggled during the pandemic. He added that the Opera House is an incredible asset to the City of Woodstock; however, there is a perception that the Opera House is underutilized. Mayor Turner suggested that programming needs to be for all age demographics and the City needs to add a wider variety of programming. Mayor Turner mentioned using external promoters, such as Jeff Kleinschmidt, to bring in new ideas and attract new people in to the Opera House. He asked for Council's ideas. T. Nierman agreed with the use of external promoters and said his son lives and works in California and markets properties there. Council members agreed that programming needs to reach a wide range of audiences. Mayor Turner suggested looking at the Opera House more as a venue, which will change the perception and will bring more people in. D. Flynn said the Opera House is a huge opportunity that could leverage additional activity via revenues generated from concessions and the bar. He also suggested looking at new ways of bringing in programming and revenue by using external promoters.

W. Piersall suggested selling memberships and packages, along with tickets for events with dinner or an overnight at the The Cherry Tree Inn. G. Tebo said the Opera House is a community asset and it serves the community first. It's not a money-making venture, it's a service to the community. Mayor Turner challenged D. Campbell to work up a strategy, change the traditional model and be willing to take on more risk.

D. Campbell said he is on the same page and he mentioned many of the different types of events other than the arts. He added that they are hoping to bring more corporate events to the Opera House, as well. In response to a comment from W. Piersall, D. Campbell said the Opera House has already created a membership program. They are currently working with five outside promoters in the hopes of bringing in a variety of acts. Mayor Turner thanked D. Campbell for his comments.

4. Road Improvements

Mayor Turner stated that the roads in Woodstock are rough because we are located in northern Illinois; the constant freeze/thaw process causes a lot of damage. Mayor Turner stated that the City Council has kept property taxes flat since 2010 for City of Woodstock residents. Therefore, the City has not received all the funds they could have to dedicate towards roads. Mayor Turner discussed some options and suggested that Council members have a discussion at a future Council meeting. There was a consensus by the City Council to review this topic further and decide the best way to move forward. It was noted

that the last street assessment was done in 2015. C. Betz said Public Works will be bringing a new street condition assessment forward to the June 15th Council meeting for consideration. The goal of the study is to make sure the City is re-paving the right roads.

5. Old Courthouse Plan - Status and Next Steps

Mayor Turner asked that staff provide a status update on the Old Courthouse at the June 15th City Council meeting.

6. Automation Strategy

No discussion at this time, this will be discussed at a future Strategic Planning Workshop.

7. Zoning / City Planning / Code Enforcement & City Appearance

No discussion at this time, this will be discussed at a future Strategic Planning Workshop.

8. Liquor License / Video Gaming License Allocations

Mayor Turner stated that the City is at its current maximum of twenty-five video gaming licenses. He would like Council to re-visit video gaming and the possibility of increasing the number of licenses. He noted that there are a number of liquor-licensed businesses in Woodstock that would like to add video gaming to their establishment. In response to a question from Mayor Turner, Chief Lieb said a lot of the Police Department's calls involve alcohol, mostly from bars, not restaurants. There was a consensus from Council to further review this topic.

9. Route 47 Pre-Construction Planning

10. Business & Rental Property Management Program

11. Events Coordination / Planning

12. Federal Stimulus Money Usage

13. Rec Center / Pool Business Development Strategy

14. Reporting / Budgets / Operational Feedback

15. Marketing / Communications / Web Sites

16. City Planning - Boundaries Expansion

Due to time constraints, no discussions were conducted regarding topics 9-16 at this time, these will be discussed at a future Strategic Planning Workshop.

ADJOURN:

Motion by D. Flynn, second by G. Tebo to adjourn this Strategic Planning Workshop of the Woodstock City Council to the City Council Meeting on Tuesday, June 15, 2021, in the Council Chambers at Woodstock City Hall. Ayes: D. Flynn, L. Lohmeyer, T. Nierman, W. Piersall, B. Seegers, G. Tebo and Mayor M. Turner. Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: none.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Howie
Chief Deputy City Clerk